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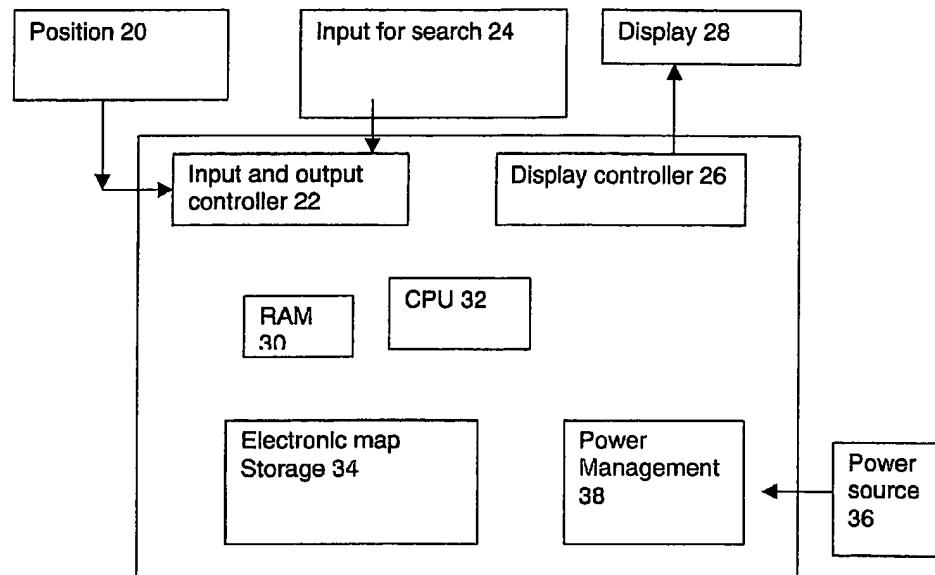
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(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declaration under Rule 4.17:
— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: DIGITAL MAP DISPLAY



(57) Abstract: A digital map display having a zooming method and a zooming device is disclosed. By determining the number of entities such as buildings at the position, a desirable zoom scale for the display of a digital map for that location is set using a predetermined ration of total entities. This means that when traveling the user does not have control the digital map display to have an understanding of the current surroundings, and the required direction of travel.

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Published:

— *with international search report*

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a digital map display and refers particularly, though not exclusively, to a digital map display for screens of portable and non-portable devices.

Definitions

Throughout this specification a reference to a road is to be taken as including a reference to a street, lane, alley, place, avenue, close, highway, expressway, parkway, route, thoroughfare, track, way, boulevard, roadway, terrace, and any other passage over which a motor vehicle can pass.

Background to the Invention

Digital maps are put into electronic form so as to be displayed on the display screen of electronic devices such as, for example, a navigation system including an in-vehicle navigation system, portable digital assistance (PDA), mobile telephone, tablet computer, notebook computer, laptop computer. The common element to all such devices is that they have a display screen.

The prior art includes numerous such devices for a user to operate to instruct a system to enlarge or reduce the displayed portion of the digital map within the display screen. These generally require the user to use prescribed buttons to effect the scale change; or by changing the scale setting while watching the display screens. An example is US Patent Number. 6,411,274. US Patent 5,315,298 discloses a method of zooming by determining whether or not there is a boundary of the areas having different levels of detail on the screen of a display. US Patent Number 4,675,676 discloses the automatic reduction or enlargement of a displayed map from a reduced or enlarged map data storage device in accordance with the distance between the present position of a vehicle and a destination. US Patent Application 2003/0023376 and US Patent Application 2003/0038787 disclose a system based on the vehicle position and changes in the area the vehicle is approaching on the roadmap such that the scaling factor of the map is changed by a scaling factor.

However, it is widely recognized that a person using a navigation system cannot devote their full attention to the screen display when involved with another task. This is particularly critical when driving a vehicle such as, for example, an emergency vehicle such as an ambulance, fire truck or police vehicle. At such times, it is important that the driver's attention be directed to the driving of the vehicle, and that the operator has both hands free to operate the controls of the vehicle. Most of the time the driver can only glance at the display screen in the same manner as for a rear vision mirror and side mirrors of the car. Authorities in many countries recognize this by banning the use of mobile telephones when driving, unless a hands-free kit is used. It is difficult to drive a vehicle when one hand is occupied in operating display screen controls while the vehicle is in motion.

As for the automatic reduced or enlarged map in accordance with the separating distance between the present position of a vehicle and a destination, the user will not know their close surroundings to be able to make correct judgments on the next road to use. Even though routing may be provided by the system, the dynamic nature of the road network, traffic, weather, and events such as accidents, road repairs, road blockages for any reason, utility company servicing their underground assets, and so forth, will frequently disrupt the route suggest by the navigation system.

Summary of the Invention

The invention in one aspect provides a digital map display method including the steps of determining a position of a display device for the digital map; displaying the digital map at a first scale; determining a number of objects of a required category that occupy a predetermined area of the digital map as displayed; comparing the number with at least one set number of objects; and if the number is different to the set number, changing the first scale to a second scale.

If the number is greater than the at least one set number, the second scale may be smaller than the first scale. However, if the number is smaller than the at least one set number, the second scale may be larger than the first scale. Alternatively, if the

number is the same as the at least one set number, the first scale may remain unchanged.

The second scale may be a fixed percentage of the first scale; the second scale being greater than the first scale if the number of objects is less than the minimum number, and is less than the first scale if the number of objects is greater than the maximum number. The fixed percentage is preferably in the range 25% to 75%, more preferably 60% to 70%.

The predetermined area of the display may be a percentage of an area occupied by the display device height and width. Preferably, the percentage is in the range 25% to 100%, more preferably 30% to 50%.

The position may be determined using GPS. The required category may be determined from one or more of multiple layers of the digital map. The digital map is preferably a vector map. The required category may include one or more of : road, parcel of land, lot of land, buildings, places of interest, and intersections. The number of objects may be obtained by a scan of the digital map as displayed.

In another aspect there is provided a digital map display method including the steps:

- (a) determining a position of a display device for the digital map;
- (b) displaying the digital map at a first scale on a first part of a display screen of the display device; and
- (c) on a second part of the display screen of the display device displaying at a smaller scale that part of the digital map surrounding the position.

The first part may be a right display and the second part may be a left display. The left display may be of the exact location within a relatively small geographical area that forms the area immediately around the position in the map of the right display.

The split may be horizontal or vertical.

In a final aspect the present invention provides a computer usable medium comprising a computer program that is configured to cause at least one processor to execute one or more functions to perform the steps described above.

Description of the Drawings

In order that the invention may be readily understood and put into practical effect, there shall now be described by way of non-limitative example only a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the description being with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic view of the system architecture of a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a flow chart of the operation of a system according to one aspect of the present invention;

Figure 3 is an example of a first map showing a city at a first scale;

Figure 4 is an example of a map of a city at a second scale; and

Figure 5 is an example of a split screen display.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

To first refer to Figures 1 and 2 there is shown an automatic digital map display zooming method and digital map display zooming device. The display device may be any suitable such device such as, for example, a navigation system including an in-vehicle navigation system, portable digital assistance (PDA), mobile telephone, tablet computer, notebook computer, laptop computer. The common element to all such devices is that they have a display screen. It is the location of the display device that is the important factor as where that is gives to the user their present position, and can give them the information on how to get to their desired location.

Figure 1 shows that the position determination 20 is input to an input/output controller 22. Also input to controller 20 is a search input 24. The search input allows a user to search for any given location, road, point of interest, building, lot of land, plot of land, or the like, as stored in a database (not shown). The display controller 26 is for controlling the display device 28. RAM 30 and CPU 32 are provided in a normal

manner. A storage 34 is provided to store all digital maps that may be required for display. A power source 36 is controlled by power controller 38 in the usual manner.

By determining the number of objects of a predetermined character at the position of the display device by using an external system or external device such as, for example, GPS, a desirable zoom scale at that position will be automatically set using a comparison of the number of objects in an area including the present position, compared with a set number of objects. As a result, the user does not have to deal with or control the operation of the display device to have an understanding of the present position of the display device, and its present direction of travel.

Upon the system being started (step 1), the present position of the display device is determined (step 13) using, for example, GPS, or any other suitable positioning system. In step 12, the longitude (X coordinate) and latitude (Y coordinate) are obtained from the positioning system determination in step 13.

The details of the road map relevant for the present location is loaded (step 2) and displayed at a predetermined scale (step 3). The predetermined scale may be the largest possible scale so that the map can zoom-in easily, a mid-level scale so the map can zoom-in or zoom-out easily, or it can commence with the scale at the level at which it was when the system was last ended.

Upon the map being loaded and displayed, and the coordinates of the present position of the display device input, a timer trigger is started (step 4). The timer preferably operates in counts of whole seconds. By using GPS or other positioning determining system, the location on the map of the present position of the display device can be determined. This position is converted to X (horizontal) and Y (vertical) coordinates on the map as displayed.

In step 5 the system then determines the number of objects that fall within a predetermined category (such as, for example road, parcel, lot, places of interest, intersections, or segments of a road) that occupy a set percentage or ratio of the complete display area. This may be, for example, 33%, or one third of the display

area. However, the percentage may be more – up to 100% if required. However, it can't be a very small percentage or in rural areas the map may have no meaning. It is preferably in the range 25% to 100%, more preferably 33% to 50%. This is preferably centered on the present position. However, if the display device is moving, it may be for the percentage in that part of the map ahead of the display device, given its present direction of travel. The number of objects can be determined from the information contained on the map, or from the positioning system.

Each digital map is in a plurality of layers. Each layer includes a number of objects. The map of a city is shown in Figure 3. It consists of 7,138 roads. If the map as displayed showed the entire city, the number of objects displayed will be 7,138. If a small section of a city is displayed, the result will be far fewer objects to be displayed. In Figure 4 is shown a map of a small part of a city. The number of objects as displayed is only 26.

To get from the scale of the map of Figure 3 to a scale of the map of Figure 4, the number of objects within the map is determined.

In step 6, the question is asked: is the number of objects greater than a predetermined maximum number? The predetermined maximum number may vary according to the locality, type of digital map, the complexity of the digital map, and the nature of the device on which the map is being displayed.. The locality may be according to country, region (e.g. state, province, prefecture, or the like), municipality, city, suburb, or other geographical region.

If yes, in step 7 the system instructs the display device to alter the scale by zooming in to the next scale level. This would be a smaller scale level. The smaller scale level is preferably a fixed percentage of the previous scale level. This may be in the range 25% to 75% but is more preferably in the range 60% to 70% of the previous zoom scale.

If the number of objects is not greater than the first set number, the question is asked in step 8: is the number of objects less than a second set number of objects? Again the second set number may vary according to the locality, type of digital map, the complexity of the digital map, and the nature of the device on which the map is being displayed. If yes, in step 9 the system instructs the display device to zoom out to the next scale level. This would be a larger scale level. (e.g. 120% of previous zoom scale)

If the answer to the question in step 8 is no, the system does not provide an instruction to the display device to change the scale of the display so the display remains unchanged (step 10). The system then passes back to step 12.

If the answer to either of steps 6 or 8 is yes, the timer is reset to zero (step 11) and the process passes back to step 12.

The subsequent steps of 3 to 10 are then repeated according to the timer cycle. The timer cycle may be, for example, every five or ten seconds, depending on the processor speed. This happens continuously until the system operation is ended by the number of objects being less than the maximum number, and more than the minimum number.

Therefore, when a map of the scale of Figure 3 is loaded, the determination of the number of objects will be 7,138. If the percentage is 33%, and the area is the centre of the map, the number of objects may be, for example, 3,000. If this is greater than the preset maximum, the scale will zoom in to the next smaller scale and the timer reset. The number of objects is then recounted. That would be a lesser number. If the scale factor reduction is 60%, the lesser number may be 1,500. If the lesser number is still greater than the maximum number, the process is repeated according to the timing cycle until the number of objects is less than or equal to the predetermined maximum number; and more than or equal to the minimum number – i.e. is in the range of minimum number to maximum number.

The maximum number of objects may be any suitable number such as, for example, twenty, thirty, forty or fifty. The minimum number of objects may also be any suitable number such as, for example, five, ten, or twenty. Either or both numbers may be preset, or be set by user input, or be a combination of them. The only requirement is for there to be a maximum and minimum number, and for the maximum to be greater than the minimum.

Digital maps are normally vector maps. Each object displayed has vector coordinates to enable the system to locate the object on the display. Vector maps have a plurality of layers of display. Each layer will contain objects. If the object as displayed is a point, it will be located by reference to its mapping coordinates X, Y. This is particularly relevant for objects such as, for example, places of interest. If the object as displayed is a line, it will be located by reference to the two points that represent the ends of the line. This is particularly relevant for objects such as, for example, a road, particularly at a large scale. If the object as displayed has multiple parallel lines it will be located by reference to the points that mark the ends of each line. This is particularly relevant for objects such as, for example, roads and highways, particularly at a small scale. For a displayed object that has closed lines (e.g. polygon) it will be located by reference to the end points of each line. This is particularly relevant for objects such as, for example, buildings, parcel of land, lot of land, region, and so forth.

Steps 13 and 2 may happen simultaneously or sequentially, as may steps 12 and 3.

In Figure 5 there is shown a split display. Here, the left display 14 and the right display 15 have maps at different scales. That of the right screen 15 is a bigger scale than the left screen 14 so a driver or other user can see the "big picture" in right display 15 and know where they are, and where they are headed, relative to a substantial geographical area. The left display 14 is of the exact location within a relatively small geographical area that forms the area immediately around the present location in the map of the right display 15 (as shown by the arrow approximately mid-map). The relative scales may be selected by a user, or may be preset. Whether the right display is at a smaller or larger scale to the left display may

be set by the user, or may be preset. The scales of displays 14, 15 are preferably set by using the method described above. Although it is preferred that displays 14, 15 be the same size, they may be different. The split may be vertical as shown, or may be horizontal.

The present invention also extends to a computer usable medium comprising a computer program that is configured to cause at least one processor to execute one or more functions to perform the steps described above.

Whilst there has been described in the foregoing description a preferred embodiment of the present invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the technology concerned that many variations in details of design, operation or construction may be made without departing from the present invention.

The present invention extends to all features disclosed both individually or in any possible permutation and combination.

The Claims

1. A digital map display method including the steps:
 - (a) determining a position of a display device for the digital map;
 - (b) displaying the digital map at a first scale;
 - (c) determining a number of objects of a required category that occupy a predetermined area of the digital map as displayed;
 - (d) comparing the number with at least one set number of objects; and
 - (e) if the number is different to the set number, changing the first scale to a second scale.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein if the number is greater than the at least one set number, the second scale is smaller than the first scale.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein if the number is smaller than the at least one set number, the second scale is larger than the first scale.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein if the number is the same as the at least one set number, the first scale remains unchanged.
5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the at least one set number is a range between a maximum number and a minimum number.
6. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the second scale is a fixed percentage of the first scale; the second scale being greater than the first scale if the number of objects is less than the minimum number, and is less than the first scale if the number of objects is greater than the maximum number.
7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the fixed percentage is in the range 25% to 75%, the maximum number is in the range 20 to 50, and the minimum number is in the range 5 to 20.

8. A method as claimed in claim 6 or claim 7, wherein the fixed percentage is in the range 60% to 70%.
9. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the predetermined area of the display is a percentage of an area occupied by the display device height and width.
10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the percentage is in the range 25% to 100%.
11. A method as claimed in claim 9 or claim 10, wherein the percentage is in the range 30% to 50%.
12. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the position is determined using GPS.
13. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the required category is one or more selected from the group consisting of: buildings, places of interest, intersections, road, parcel of land, and lot of land.
14. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 13, wherein the digital map is a vector map.
15. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the number of objects is determined from at least one layer of a plurality of layers of the digital map.
16. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 15, wherein the number of objects is obtained by a scan of the digital map as displayed.
17. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 16, wherein the display is a split display having a left screen and a right screen having displays at different scales.

18. A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the display of the right screen is of a larger scale than the display of the left screen, and the map displayed in the left screen forms an area immediately around the position as displayed in the right screen.

19. A digital map display method including the steps:

- (a) determining a position of a display device for the digital map;
- (b) displaying the digital map at a first scale on a first part of a display screen of the display device; and
- (c) on a second part of the display screen of the display device displaying at a smaller scale that part of the digital map surrounding the position.

20. A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the first part is a right display and the second part is a left display.

21. A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the left display is of the exact location within a relatively small geographical area that forms the area immediately around the position in the map of the right display.

22. A method as claimed in any one of claims 19 to 21, wherein the split is horizontal or vertical.

23. A computer usable medium comprising a computer program that is configured to cause at least one processor to execute one or more functions to perform the steps of any one of claims 1 to 22.

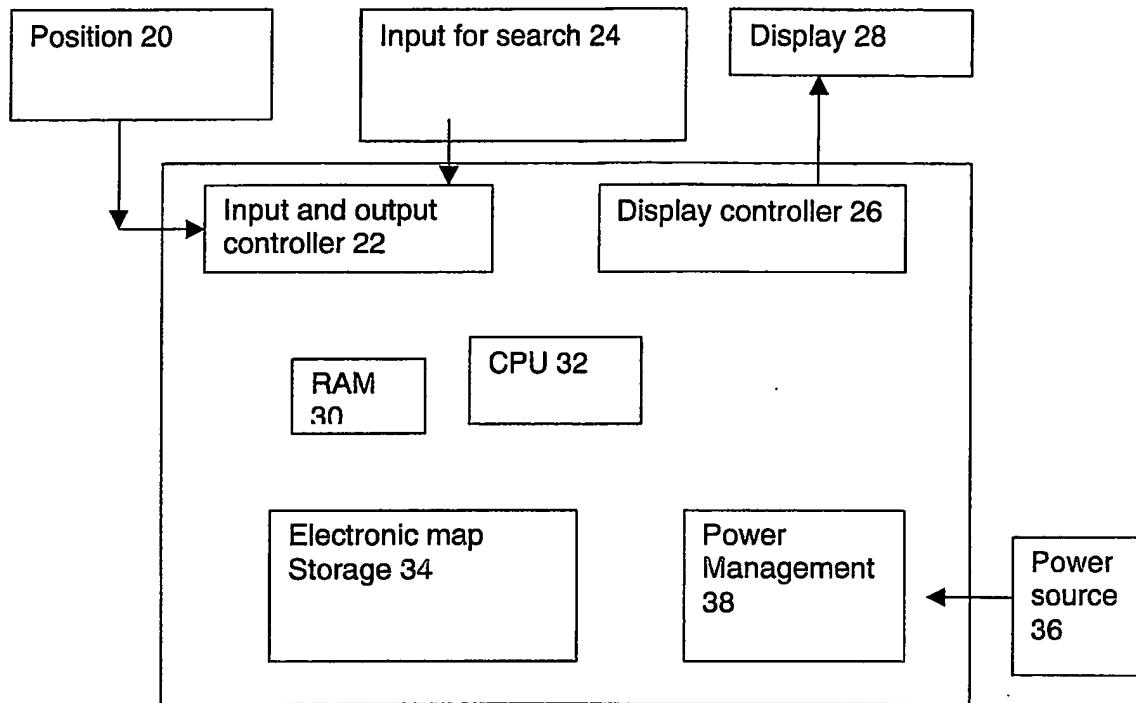


Figure 1

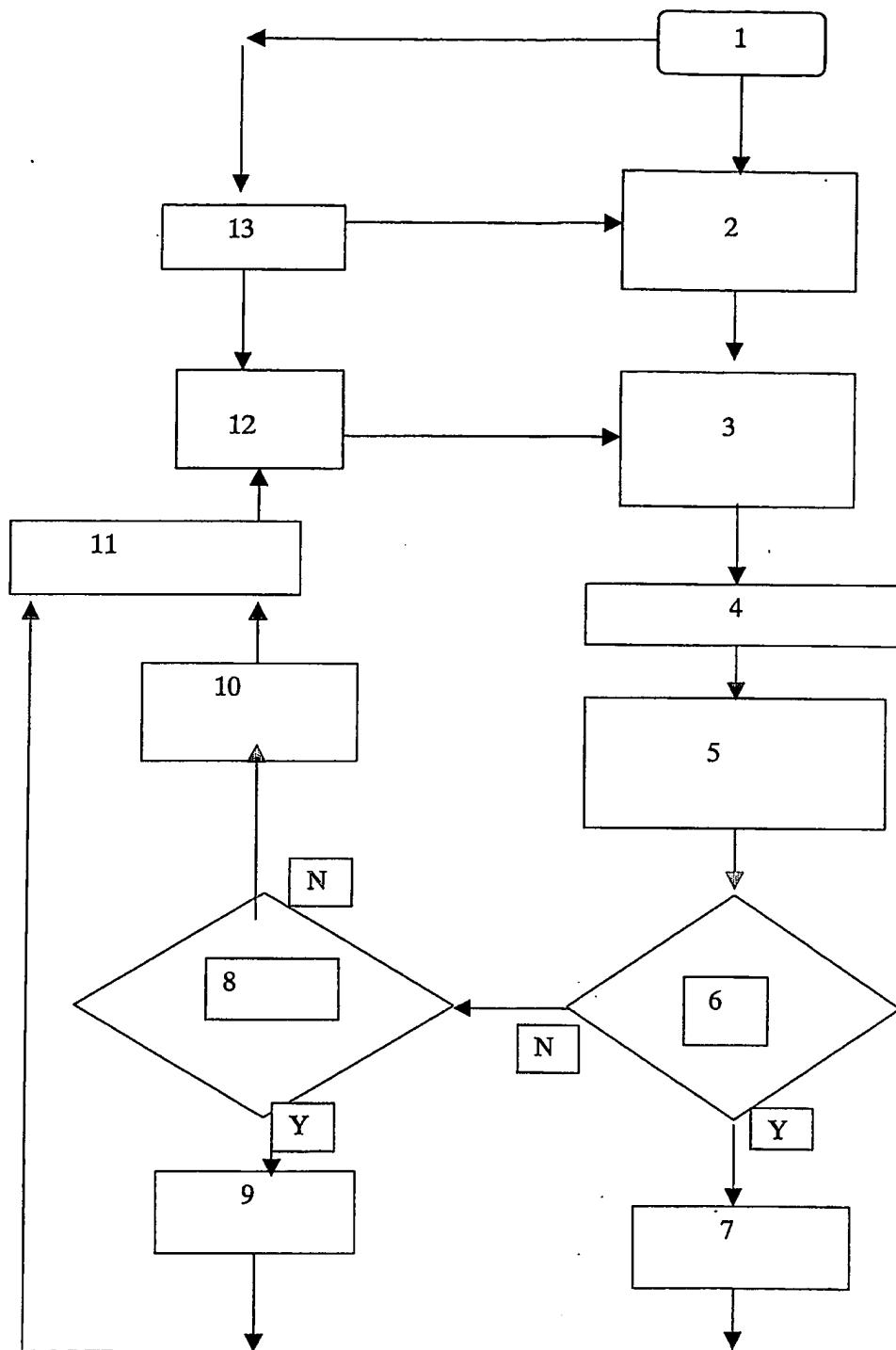


FIGURE 2

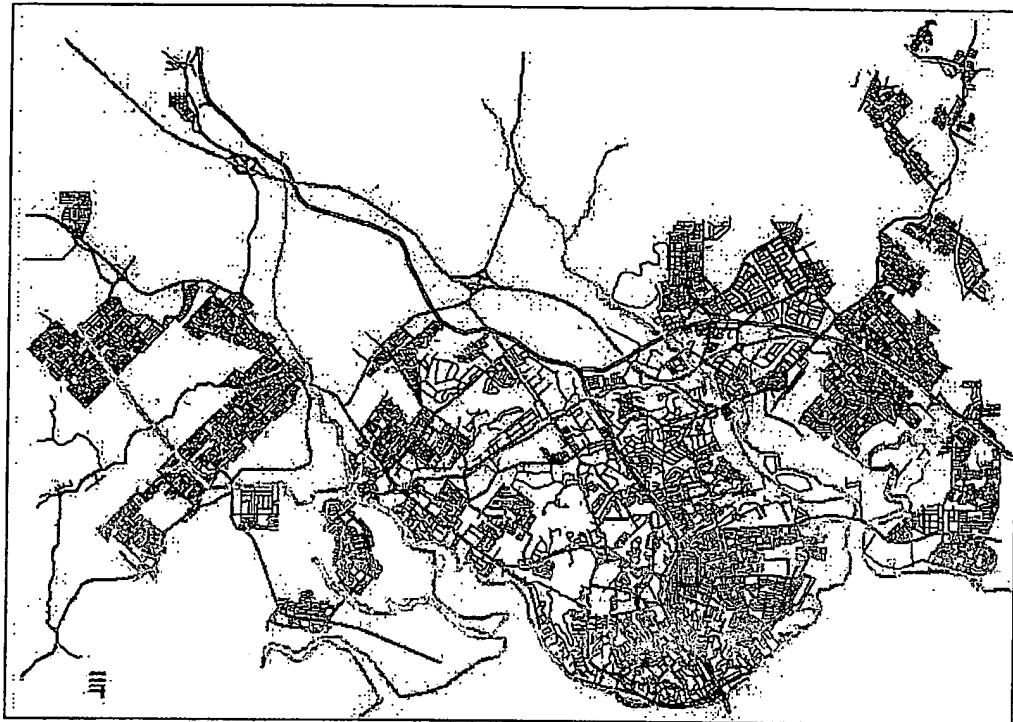


Figure 3

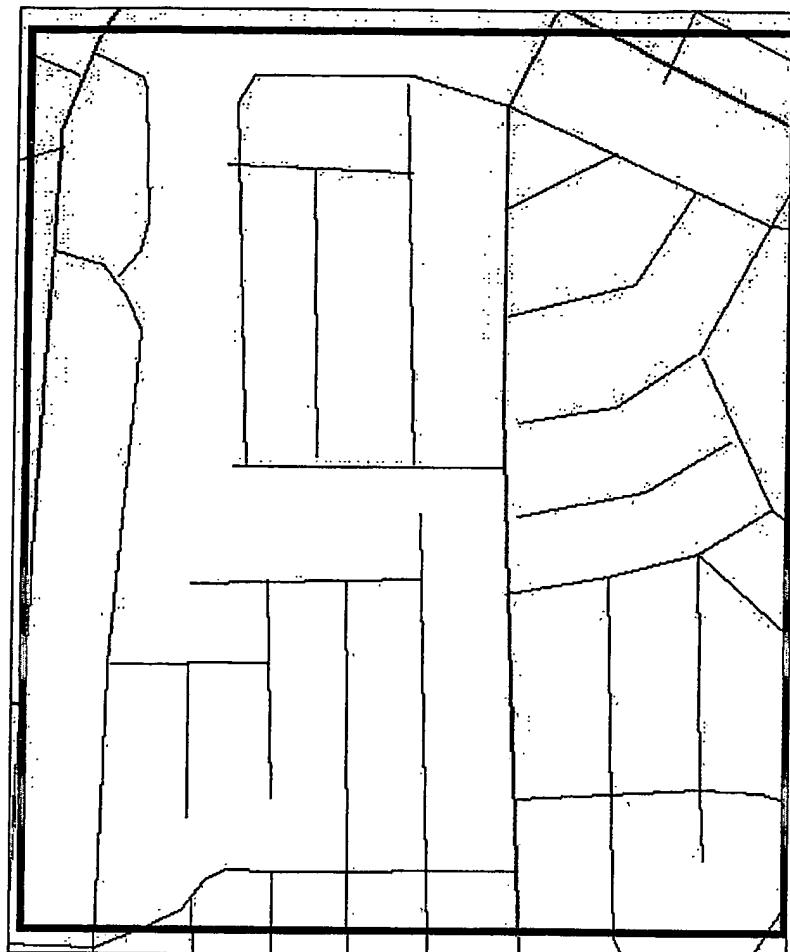
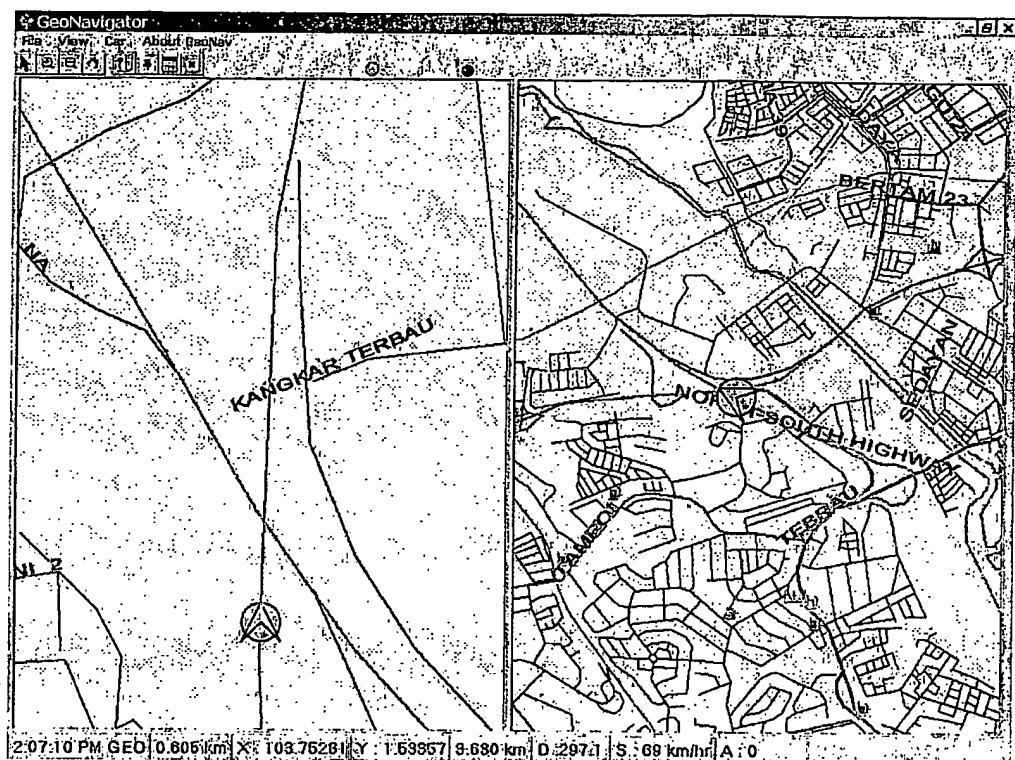


Figure 4

5/5

**Figure 5**

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000068

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl. 7: G01C 21/30

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

DWPI: (Map+ OR Cartography OR Navigation).AND (Zoom+ OR Scal+) AND Digital

USPTO: Digital AND Map\$ AND Zoom\$

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	Derwent Abstract Accession No. 2003-408797/39, Class P85;T01, JP 2003076267-A (NIPPON) 14 March 2003	
A	Derwent Abstract Accession No. 2003-385446/37, Class P85;T01, JP 2003058293-A (OOMOTO) 28 February 2003	
X	Derwent Abstract Accession No. 2002-613805/66, Class P85;T01, JP 2002216143-A (JO) 2 August 2003. See Whole Abstract	19-23
A	US 6321158 B1 (DELORME et al.) 20 November 2001 See Abstract, Lines 24-39 - Column 49, Lines 11-24 - Column 74	

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:		
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention	
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone	
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art	
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search
24 May 2004

Date of mailing of the international search report

31 MAY 2004

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000068

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5699255 A (ELLIS et al.) 16 December 1997 Abstract, Lines 13-67 - Column 6, Lines 11-67 - Column 7 and Lines 1-51 - Column 8	
A	WO 96/14558 (HILL et al.) 17 May 1996 Abstract and Lines 1-31 - Page 2	
A	US 5084822 A (HAYAMI) 28 January 1992 Abstract and Figures 5a-5b	
A	US 4972319 A (DELORME) 20 November 1990 Abstract	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000068

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a)

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

Claim 1: Relates to a display map having a zooming method in which the scale of the map displayed is determined by the number of entities present in the map. The determination of the number of entities present and the comparison to a pre determined threshold is the first special technical feature.

(Continued In *Supplemental Box*)

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000068

Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of Boxes I to VIII is not sufficient)

Continuation of Box No: III

Claim 19: Relates to a display map having two parts in the first part a map is displayed at a first scale and in the second part the map is displayed at a second scale. Displaying the same map side by side at two different scales is the second technical feature.

These groups of claims are not linked as to form a single general inventive concept, that is, they do not share any special technical features. Therefore these claims do not relate to one invention only.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000068

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report				Patent Family Member			
US	6321158	CA	2183842	CA	2257258	CA	2279191
		CA	2280677	US	5559707	US	5802492
		US	5848373	US	5948040	US	2003182052
		WO	9748065	WO	9835311		
US	5699255						
WO	9614558	AU	37396/95				
US	5084822	DE	3842179	JP	1156618	JP	1161111
		JP	1165918				
US	4972319	EP	0436263	US	5030117		

Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.

END OF ANNEX